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When Mañana Won't Work

OPERATIONS falling hard upon the capture of Messina should go a long way toward lessening tension between the Soviets and their Anglo-American allies. The more the Standley incident fades into the distance the more apparent its usefulness becomes, for our ambassador called dramatic attention to the vast aid we are rendering to the Russian cause. Those who like to compare the scope of the Sicilian operation with the whole Russo-German front tend to minimize the vast stores of matériel we are pouring into Russia, the scores of German divisions held in Western Europe for action at all the possible invasion points and the effect of large scale American and RAF bombing in such matters as: the Luftwaffe forces required in Germany for purposes of defense, the destruction of a large part of the nazi productive plant, the disorganization of their essential transportation and the progressive obliteration of German hopes of victory.

When to these are added new European operations on a far wider scale—now made more feasible by the fall of Sicily—the Russians will have little cause to complain that we are not assuming our due share of the burden of the war. No doubt the Kremlin has realized it all along, but they naturally want the enemy to withdraw appreciable numbers of troops from the Russian front as soon as possible. Particularly as it seems to be widely known that the Berlin generals still prefer anything to a two-front war. No doubt, also, the Anglo-American leaders have recognized Moscow second front pressure for what it was; they undertook no premature European landings.

But when complete and fully public understanding is reached between Russia and her western allies, on the second front, sources of grave misunderstanding will remain. Despite official attempts to place all onus for Russian absence at Casablanca and Quebec on Russia's present neutrality toward Japan, a number of basic differences still bar wholehearted joint prosecution of the war and planning for the peace. Let those who would put off trying to reach agreements on such matters consider who has done the bulk of the fighting thus far, who will have the strongest armed forces on the European scene when hostilities cease and even the dire possibility that if disaffection should grow strong enough, Stalin might listen to the nazi overtures for a separate peace.

It is reported that in England sentiment is growing that post-war frontiers (the biggest source of contention) must be discussed now, if not in complete detail at least as to general principles. Otherwise sudden enemy capitulation might result in a chaos that would be resolved directly by those having the greatest force of arms at disputed centers. And these basic decisions must be made now even at the cost of displeasing certain governments in English exile. Where we cannot fully achieve the boundaries we deem best, we should insist on guarantees of personal liberties.

A general agreement now among the United Nations as to specific war aims would make for much more wholehearted and efficient military collaboration. It would thwart nazi efforts to whip up what present disaffection there is into the deepest mutual suspicion and mistrust. Not only would this step hasten the victorious conclusion of the war, but make possible in Europe some sort of decent and stable peace. We continue at cross purposes with Russia at our peril.

A Junket and a Safety Valve

ONE wonders whether the five Senators who have been "studying the war zones" smoke big black cigars. *Life* has thoughtfully provided us with intimate views of their preparations for their great adventure, including the thrill of getting all dressed up. They have kept fairly quiet, but they have found one blast to keep the home folks happy. They have unearthed an "outrage."

At a moment when our grain stocks of everything except wheat are perilously low, at a moment when we are feeding wheat to livestock, and we know that our reserves will not stand that strain forever, Senator Ralph O. Brewster (Rep.,

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Maine) is all upset because maybe we are going to buy some North African wheat at 60 cents a bushel more than the current price in the USA. How dreadful! We are not told what the freight charges would be—and are—to carry American wheat to North Africa. We are not told what the insurance charges are. We are not told what constitutes a proper amortization charge per bushel for the new ships we are rushing to completion without regard for cost. We do know that perhaps we shall credit our French allies $2.10 per bushel for wheat f.o.b. North Africa and thereby offset some of our charges against their account for guns and munitions. We get a little lend-lease in reverse, and there is an outcry to please, one supposes, the American farm bloc.

Perhaps this is the only "outrage" the Senators will find. If it is, their junket will have been a cheap junket. And such junkets probably do serve a useful purpose, however irritating they may be to the men who are trying to do a job under the peculiar difficulties of wartime. Senators, being bold, fearless, outspoken men, who never seek to curry favor and whose motives are always thoroughly disinterested, naturally are wonderful watchdogs over those wicked ogres, the civilian and Army administrators. It is reassuring to read that they have observed "splendid military unity." It is reassuring to find them on the lookout for pleasure-driving in North Africa, and noticing "a good many cars just running around." And most of all it is reassuring to find them protecting us against the wiles of slippery foreigners who would charge us 60 cents a bushel more for wheat than we would have to pay at home. We can feel confident that if this is the worst they can find, this war is being conducted along singularly efficient lines.

There are two little details about the Senators which leave us in a quandary. Senator Lodge (Rep., Massachusetts) has let his colleagues get ahead of him and has remained in solitary state on the island of Sicily. No explanation is given for this lingering on his part. And yet every news dispatch emphasizes his absence. The second detail is this: "The Senators wound up their day [a day devoted entirely to clearing up that wheat situation] at four o'clock, when they went swimming." How does the North African water compare with water up in Maine, Senator Brewster?

Fresh Breezes Blowing, and to the Left

CANADIAN politics have for a generation remained remarkably stable—with plenty of rumblings just below the surface and with occasional flare-ups. They have continued largely within the framework of the Liberal and Conservative Parties, precisely like our Republicans and Democrats in their monopoly of power—the Prairie Provinces contributing their quota of equivalents to our own Progressives and Farmer-Laborites. Of recent years old-line leadership has been weak, the Conservatives not even possessing a Willkie to harass them, and the Liberals floating along with Mr. Mackenzie King, whose greatest merit is his colorlessness. Meanwhile tension has been increasing in traditionally Liberal Quebec, and there has been a general sentiment that the political framework fails to fit the country's real economic and social needs. A notable phenomenon has been the growth in influence, if not in real power, of the "CCF," the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, a socialist (in the British sense), progressive outfit with able leadership and a program something analogous to certain more radical aspects of our own New Deal. It has just dealt a scorching defeat to the Liberals in Ontario, allowing the Conservatives to win a majority in the Provincial House and itself becoming the official Opposition. It formerly met with hierarchical disapproval, because of its link with socialism, but of late there have been indications of a friendlier attitude on the part of the Quebec bishops, who had been so openly hostile.

The recent by-election, limited as it was to four seats in the Dominion Parliament, is, of course, merely another straw in the breeze, and the breeze can veer back to normal, but the straw indicates a far from normal direction right now. Of the four seats, none was won either by a Liberal or a Conservative. In Quebec the Stanstead constituency returned a candidate of the "Bloc Populaire" (of which Burton Le Doux has written in THE COMMONWEAL). A Montreal district returned "Labor-Progressive" Fred Rose, not untinged with former radical connections. In Saskatchewan two CCF men replaced Liberals. Since, strictly, we do not have by-elections, it is hard to conceive a US parallel. But a serious upset in the next general election seems not unlikely, and in contrast to what seems to be the direction south of the line, in Canada the wind is blowing Left.

N.B.

"MEN often glibly say that World War II is a social revolution. But the Catholic Church is the only Christian power that has systematically studied the problem from this viewpoint, or taken steps to end class war by compromising the struggle between Capital and Labor. What the papacy demands is social justice within nations. It believes that if this can be accomplished, wars will largely cease: the work of justice is peace. . . . Most Catholics and non-Catholics alike would agree that a peace that does not embody, at least roughly, the papal position on fundamental social issues will bring not social peace but a sword."

(From an excellent summary of the position of the Pope in the world, *Time,* August 16, 1943.)

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Open Cities

THE Italian government has declared Rome an open city and only a few weeks ago the American press was claiming that the bombing of Rome was justified because the Italians had not made Rome an open city but now that Badoglio is trying to make it an open city the American press is busy proving that no city can be an open city in total war. With their mouths full of mush about the reverence they feel for "sacred monuments" the commentators say that the Italian unilateral declaration is trickery to gain time for the Axis, that the only open city is the city that surrenders (unconditionally of course) and that if Rome with its "sacred monuments" were to be recognized as an open city this would be entirely because of our well-known charitable and humanitarian instincts. Concurrently it would also be because this action might drive the inhabitants of less privileged cities into despair and revolt.

The general attitude is that Rome is a special case. When Rome was bombed all sorts of special precautions were taken. Now that it is proposed that Rome be granted the status of an open city all sorts of special attention will be paid to the proposal—but with due attention to the danger of creating a precedent. No generosity must be shown Rome which might be invoked for another city. And yet any generosity, or what Major Eliot calls "an act of grace," is preferable to getting involved with principle. For if a principle were to be established it would apply to Milan, to Turin, to Genoa and then things might get out of control altogether and it might be claimed that the principle applied also to French cities, to German cities—even to Berlin. That is why the "sacred monument" theme is so useful: it maintains Rome in a special category. It may even permit us to name certain conditions under which it would become possible for us to recognize Rome as an open city without our incurring any obligation to recognize any other city expressing desire for such recognition but lacking the "sacred monuments."

Rome is a subject of extreme interest. The subject of the open city is of extreme interest. The subject of those cities in Europe which are not Rome and which are "open" only to the falling of bombs is of extreme interest. It is even more interesting than is the subject of Rome. It is more interesting than the subject of Rome because we have only destroyed military objectives in Rome—with a minimum destruction of "sacred monuments"; we have killed comparatively few civilians in Rome: Rome is a special case, a privileged city; if any city is to be spared Rome will be that city. There is no disagreement as to that. The "act of grace" if it is to be exercised anywhere will be exercised in Rome's favor. Our charitable and humanitarian instincts if they are to influence our action anywhere will influence it in favor of Rome. We are all agreed about that. And that is why we are interested in the other cities, in what remains of the other cities, in what our action is accomplishing in the other cities, in what looks like a gradual deviation from the purpose we had when we started to bomb other cities.

We started to bomb them all with the same military purpose and the same technical prudence with which we recently bombed Rome. When we started there was no need to discuss the matter of open cities. The only objectives were military objectives and the incidental destruction that accompanied the bombing of these objectives was held to a minimum. We still bomb military objectives but as our mass attacks became heavier, day by day and night by night the incidental destruction increased. The destruction of the sacred monuments which are men's homes increased. The destruction of the railroads, the factories, the docks increased but the destruction of civilian lives increased even more, the destruction of non-military objectives increased until entire cities now are abolished.

The acceleration of destruction was inevitable no matter at what targets the planes aimed because there were so many more planes, so many more bombs. And we are nearer now, constantly drawing nearer to more cities, to more objectives, constantly with heavier bombs, more numerous planes. The acceleration of destruction will continue. We announce that it will continue. We are amazed at the effectiveness of destruction. We recognize in the enemy population signs of panic. We have come now to count on the despair of the enemy population, the revolt of the enemy population, the despair and the revolt of the people in the bombed cities.

This creation of despair and revolt has become a major element in our plan. That is the new fact we now must recognize. Imperceptibly we have passed from the pity we felt for the Londoners to the silence with which we accept as inevitable the suffering of the German and Italian peoples. The horror we felt when the crowds fled along the roads of France we no longer feel when the crowds are driven from the German cities, the Italian cities. There was a time, also, when we could hardly look at the photographs from Chungking.

So that for those who think that the enemy cities should not be totally destroyed, for those who believe that a Europe reduced to despair is not a Europe which can be rebuilt, for those who fear that for the first time in this war the means employed in the war are incompatible with the aims of the war, there is not much use counting on emotions or humanitarian instincts. It is to political wisdom that we must turn.

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Indians in the Bronx

By William Fifield

"ALL RIGHT," said Mr. Polishook to his seven-year-old son Abraham, "so you are an Indian. I am going to tell you about Indians. Indians do not go around the house—"

"Tepee, papa. They live in tepees," Abraham interrupted.

"So tepee!" said Mr. Polishook angrily. "They do not go around the tepee upsetting stuff and hollering 'Ki-yi' and getting bagel crumbs on the carpet."

"On the skins," corrected Abraham. "They have skins, papa."

"Well, whatever they have!" Mr. Polishook shouted. "Whatever they have they don't get bagel crumbs on them. If they got to eat bagels they go out in the woods under a tree."

"Yes, papa," Abraham admitted.

"So if you got to be an Indian go some place under a tree," said Mr. Polishook.

Abraham Polishook went down the street until he came to the grocery store. There he bought a red candy whip for a penny. Then he walked along Rhinelander Avenue for four blocks, and at the end of every block he stopped and said "Ki-yi" in a solemn voice. By the time he had said "Ki-yi" four times he was beginning to feel like Little Beaver, which was his Indian name after the character on the radio. Also he had arrived at Seminole Avenue, which was the last street before the big vacant lot that ran clear to Eastchester Road.

The Robin Hood Indian Club had its tepee about fifty feet into the vacant lot from the corner of Seminole Avenue and Pawnee Place. It had originally been the Robin Hood Club, located in Sherwood Forest; but then Mr. Polishook had come one day to see the place where his son did his playing, and he had said it was a funny thing the streets had Indian names so they ought to be Indians. They had changed the name to the Robin Hood Indian Club, and Abraham Polishook had changed his name from Little John to Little Beaver.

Abraham, feeling properly in the rôle of Little Beaver, came to the corner of Seminole and Pawnee. He stopped by the telephone post and examined the red candy whip he had bought. It was soft and gummy from the sun. He ate half of it, and then rubbed the remaining half over his face. He could tell by the sticky feeling when he had his face red enough.

"Ki-yi," he said to himself. "Ki-yi." He did not say it very loud because he was about to slip off into the forest, and Indians were always silent in the forest.

He did not go directly to the tepee. That would leave tracks somebody could follow. Instead, he tiptoed around to the right and hid behind an elm tree. He looked back cautiously. No white scout in a buckskin suit had followed him. He listened for the sound of hoofs, maybe a herd of buffalo stampeding down on him, but he didn't hear anything except the streamliner train going to Boston over on the New York, New Haven & Hartford tracks. Thus satisfied, he went quickly down the slope in front of him and, breaking off twigs so that he could trail his way back if necessary, came up again and stopped before the tepee of the Robin Hood Indian Club.

"How," he said softly.

Six-year-old Aaron Broadnitz put his head out through the tepee opening.

"How, Sitting Bull," said Abraham.

"Abraham," said Aaron, forgetting in his excitement that Abraham was not Abraham but Little Beaver, "come inside. You got to see."

"Got to see what?" asked Abraham, also forgetting he was Little Beaver.

"An Indian. An honestly Indian. He was here."

"You mean in the tepee?"

"When I come he was in the tepee. He was just sitting there bawling."

"What's wrong with him?"

"He don't say. He talks funny," Aaron Broadnitz said.

The Indian was sitting on the ground under the laced-together tree boughs that were supposed to be a tepee and there were streaks on his face from where he had wiped at his tears. He was a boy about three years old with round cheeks and black eyes. He had on a pair of blue overalls and a straw hat with a red cloth hatband.

Abraham Polishook took charge because he was a year older than Aaron. "What's your name?" he asked the Indian boy.

The Indian shook his head back and forth vigorously.

Abraham tried again in a gentler voice. "What is your name?" he asked.

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The Indian boy looked up at him and his mouth quivered. Two big, pearly tears formed in his eyes and went rolling down his cheeks, leaving streak marks. He shook his head back and forth hopelessly.

Abraham turned to Aaron Broadnitz and Aaron made the gesture of turning his palms up and hunching his shoulders he had learned from watching his father, only now the gesture meant, "He don't make no sense, Abraham."

Abraham sat down cross-legged on the floor in front of the Indian boy. "Me Indian," he said. "Ugh. You among friendly tribe. Ugh." With the second "ugh" he hit himself on the chest the way he'd seen Indians do it in the movies. The Indian boy jumped back from him and stared at him with large, frightened eyes.

"We friends," Abraham repeated, making his voice deep like the voice of an Indian chief. "No scalp you. Friends." Then he had an inspiration. The half of the red candy whip he'd used to color his face was still in his pocket. He brought it out. "Smokeum peace pipe," he said, taking a small bite of the whip. He held out the remainder of the candy to the Indian boy. "Smokeum!" he commanded.

The little boy took the candy and ate it. It tasted very good and he was grateful for it, so he smiled. Then he said, "I lost, Mama went away." He grinned up at his two friends hopefully.

Abraham and Aaron looked at one another and then they both looked at the Indian. They shook their heads back and forth just as the boy himself had done a moment before.

"I lost," the Indian boy repeated. "Mama no here," he said, his voice becoming desperate.

Still the two others shook their heads. They did not understand the strange words. Unfortunately, the Indian boy was speaking Spanish, which was the only language he knew.

"Where my mama?" the three-year-old asked pleadingly. Then when Abraham and Aaron stared at him and said nothing he saw that the world had really come to an end and he was cast off among strangers, so he stuck his fists into his eyes and began to cry.

Aaron made the gesture with his palms and shoulders again.

"I could go get papa," Abraham suggested.

"You better," said Aaron.

Abraham went out of the tepee and, although he was in a hurry, was careful to follow the trail of broken-off twigs that led down the slope and back up again and to the path to Seminole Avenue. About twenty feet down the path from the street, he ran into Old Caleb, the Single Tax advocate who made his living by picking the berries that grew in the vacant lot and peddling them along the streets from a two-wheeled cart. Old Caleb had made quite a stir in the community at one time. He had gone down the street yelling, "*FIRE* sale! *FIRE* sale!", and when the people had come rushing to their doors he had brought up boxes of berries and explained that he was selling them to make money to buy his firewood for the winter. Mr. Polishook had said, "He shouldn't ought to do things like that. He scared Mrs. Polishook till she forgot the chicken till it tasted like a basted eagle." But Old Caleb kept on going around the neighborhood selling berries, and to his regular customers he would give a copy of a book by a man named Henry George.

"How, Little Beaver," Old Caleb said to Abraham Polishook, noticing the red smears on his face. He was not a member of the tribe, but sometimes he had been allowed to be a captive and be burned at the stake.

"Old Caleb," said Abraham excitedly, "there's an Indian in our tepee."

"Splendid, my bucko," said Old Caleb. "Could it be little Aaron Broadnitz? I mean old Sitting Bull?"

"It's a *real* Indian," Abraham said, "and he talks funny."

"Perhaps he is an Algonquin," Old Caleb said.

"Is that an Indian?" Abraham asked.

"Indeed it is," said Old Caleb, "and a very fierce and warlike Indian at that!"

"Well," said Abraham, "this is only a little boy, and he bawls all the time."

"Then maybe he is a Choctaw," Old Caleb said.

"Maybe you better come see," said Abraham.

In the tepee, the Indian boy was making a last desperate attempt to explain his plight to Aaron Broadnitz.

"Why," said Old Caleb, hearing the child's words, "this lad is a Mexican."

"He ain't an Indian?" Aaron Broadnitz asked disappointedly.

"Oh, indeed he is," Old Caleb answered quickly. "He certainly is indeed. All Mexicans are Indians, you know. They are a lost tribe that wandered off the reservation in Montana a long time ago."

"Maybe this one is bawling because he's lost," Abraham Polishook said.

"Very likely," said Old Caleb. To the Indian boy he said, "What are you called, small one?" He said it in Spanish and at the words the boy looked up with an expression as though he was hearing music.

"José," the boy said. "I lost. My mama went away."

"You were right, my little Christian," Old Caleb said to Abraham Polishook, "he is lost. He has been abandoned by his mother like a waif in a basket."

"Where my mama?" José asked.

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"I do not know, but I will search for her," Old Caleb answered. In English he said, "He says he has not eaten for two days and is fainting with hunger. I have promised him that I will provide him with food, but I have only these berries and he says berries give him a bad rash."

"I could maybe get the pie mama made this morning," said Aaron Broadnitz.

"Splendid, my bucko. Just the thing," Old Caleb said. "It isn't blackberry pie by any chance? It is? Well, now I am sure that it will be just the ticket."

"Shall I get it now?" Aaron asked.

"By all means," said Old Caleb, "but one thing I must tell you. The white man is the enemy of the Indian. You know what General Custer did to your own namesake Sitting Bull at Bunker Hill. So you must take the pie secretly . . ."

"You mean I should steal it off ma?" Aaron asked.

"Oh, I wouldn't put it quite like that," Old Caleb said. "It isn't stealing when you steal things for the sake of sweet charity. Why, even old Robin Hood . . . Oh, it wouldn't be exactly stealing, my lad. Can you have it here in half an hour? Our little Indian friend is starved almost to death."

"I'll try," said Aaron.

Aaron Broadnitz returned with the blackberry pie in exactly fourteen minutes. His mother had been out hanging up the washing so he had taken the pie and gone right out the front door of the house again.

"I got the pie," he said. He started to hand it to José, the Indian boy.

"Now not so fast, not so fast," said Old Caleb hastily. "Have you forgotten that the Indian brave is proud and stern and will bear torture without flinching? Do you think our proud young Indian friend will just take the pie right out of your hands like a gift from the WPA? Not on your life! He would die and let his scalp be hung on a tent pole before he would take charity."

"But you said—" Aaron began.

"I said you should bring the pie, and that you have done like the splendid little Christian you are. But now you must hide the pie in the woods. I will show you where to hide it. And then we must make a trail of crumbs from the hidden pie back to the tepee."

"So José will follow the trail?" asked Abraham, who knew all about trailing.

"Precisely, my bucko. That is exactly the idea," said Old Caleb. "And we will all go our separate ways so that little José can eat his pie without shame and embarrassment."

That afternoon Abraham Polishook and Aaron Broadnitz went back to the tepee of the Robin Hood Indian Club and José, the Indian boy, was sitting in the middle of the floor under the laced-together boughs bawling.

"He's still bawling," Aaron Broadnitz said.

Old Caleb was over on the other side of the big split-trunk elm picking berries and Abraham Polishook went out and got him.

"He's still bawling," Abraham said.

"I will question him and find out why," Old Caleb answered.

"Why do you weep, small one?" he asked in Spanish.

"I hungry," José replied.

"He says," said Old Caleb in English, "he has eaten all of the pie and now he has indigestion from his full stomach."

"Then I guess he won't want this," Abraham said, taking from his pocket the piece of chocolate cake he had saved from his lunch. He started to eat it himself.

"Please! Please!" cried the Indian boy, seeing the cake. He held up his hands in a begging gesture. His black eyes looked very pitiful.

"I think he is hungry," said Abraham, looking from José to Old Caleb and back again.

"Perhaps I did not understand him," Old Caleb said quickly. "My Spanish is rusty since I have not used it for a number of years."

"Ask him again," Abraham said.

Old Caleb talked in Spanish to the boy. Then he said, "Yes, I was mistaken. He says he did not find the pie and would very much enjoy the chocolate cake, which happens to be his favorite flavor."

Abraham gave the Indian boy the cake.

"Why didn't he find the pie?" Abraham asked.

"Perhaps," suggested Old Caleb, "the birds ate the crumbs we left to mark the trail."

"I don't think so," said Abraham slowly, noticing the purple stains around Old Caleb's mouth that might be from blackberries. "I don't think it was the birds."

"You are wise, young Abraham," Old Caleb answered. "Yes, it was I who ate the pie. That is the way of the world. The strong molest the weak. I used trickery, boys," he said sadly, "because I too was hungry. It is the way of the world. I am ashamed." Then he smiled at them. "However," he said cheerfully, "there can be a happy ending to it. I think, young Abraham, if you take little José home to your mother she will give him a good meal that will fill him up."

Half an hour later, Abraham, holding José by the hand, went up to his father, who was sitting in the living room, and told him what had happened.

"I am not surprised," said Mr. Polishook. "No good can come from a man who scares Mrs. Polishook so she makes chickens taste like eagles."

"Do you want your pipe, papa?" Abraham asked.

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"No, and why should I want my pipe?" said Mr. Polishook.

"I could maybe get your slippers?"

"So it's slippers," said Mr. Polishook. "What do you want out of me?"

"Nothing, pa," said Abraham, "only I was thinking we could keep José with us. He could be my little brother."

"Little brother yet!" Mr. Polishook shouted. "So now it's going to be an Indian for a little brother!"

"Well, papa," Abraham said meekly, "you said yourself I was an Indian. You said I was an Indian and I should go under a tree some place. So why can't I have an Indian for a little brother?"

"Go wash your face," Mr. Polishook said. "Your mama will give this boy something to eat. And if you got to be an Indian go in your room and do crossword puzzles and don't make no noise!"

Mr. Polishook sat the child José down at the table in the dining room and then shut himself in the hallway and telephoned the police. They told him they would investigate and call him back. They wanted to come for the little boy but he told them they better not do that. That evening José sat up at the table on two copies of books by Henry George that Old Caleb had left one time and was as polite as he knew how to be. He didn't know what was happening, but he smiled whenever anybody looked at him. About eight o'clock the police telephoned back and Mr. Polishook answered.

In a minute he hung up the 'phone and turned to Mrs. Polishook. "The papa was killed cement mixing," he said in a sad voice, "and today the mama turned on the gas."

Mrs. Polishook gave him a long questioning look, and at length Mr. Polishook shrugged his shoulders. "What else?" he said. "So he's gotta stay. What else?"

The three children, Aaron Broadnitz, Abraham Polishook, and Abraham's little brother José, started out for the vacant lot to play. At the grocery store they bought red candy whips, and then they walked down Rhinelander toward Seminole Avenue. At every crossing the two big boys said "Ki-yi" in solemn voices. Then Aaron Broadnitz stopped walking and said, "I bet it ain't no fun for an Indian to play Indian."

Abraham looked down at little José, who was holding onto his hand.

"So we'll play Robin Hood again," Abraham said.

"And who will José be?" Aaron asked.

Abraham thought a moment. Then his face brightened and he said, "He can be the sleeping Prince that Little John found in the tower of the wicked Queen."

"Listen," said Aaron Broadnitz, defying Abraham for the first time in his life, "don't forget *I* was the one that found him."

Security and Incentive

A survey of Beveridge and our own Beveridge

***By* Francis Downing**

AS THIS is being written the National Resources Planning Board has had its throat slit and its funeral expenses have been provided. If we are to have freedom from fear we are not going to be grateful to the Board. We have bitten the hand that would feed us.

Freedom from fear. Fear, says the Bible, is the beginning of wisdom. It is also the beginning of revolution. Realists do not expect that this war will bring peace, but that it will dissolve into a series of revolutions and civil wars. And if that happens it will happen because men will be afraid.

There will, I dare say, be many reasons for these fears. And the fears will be of many kinds. One kind I have seen these past days hanging over Detroit like a bloody sunset. I would not like to see it again—much less to see it all over America.

George Santayana has pointed out somewhere that those who do not know history are condemned to repeat it. I think it is clear that Fascism did not come into existence without the help, and even the eagerness, of the masses. To forget that is to accept the luxury of living in a formula.

I am writing as though I thought that Fascism were present in America. I think it is. There are many people who could be easily organized. It is certain that there are those who are eager to organize them. I am writing as though I thought that social security can be regarded as an exercise in political pragmatism. I so regard it. There seems to be no question that our people have a right to expect such legislation. But I put it on nearer ground. Like Edmund Burke I think legis-

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lation is pragmatic in character. And I think that social security legislation is a test not less of the intelligence of Congress than of its sincerity and sense of social obligation.

This is none the less true in spite of the fact that the Wagner Bill comes at a bad time. A Congress that can be so free from intelligence as to write the Smith-Connally Bill, and so much like a wilful woman that it can play with subsidies, does not offer much in the way of political realism.

For in the concrete, social security legislation is not an attempt to prevent unemployment. It is an attempt to sterilize the sense of physical and psychological frustration that attends it. It is, to use that kind of language, freedom from fear.

Nor is it altogether good that the Wagner Bill and the Board Report are so closely related to a presidential election. But this is the fact. And just as Mr. Churchill wrapped up the Beveridge Plan in a bouquet of exquisite postponement, it is likely that we shall get no new legislation until after 1944. That being said it is necessary to observe that the NRPB Report and the Wagner Bill which implements it did not spring full armed from some professor's nightmare. The Board, itself, has been studying the subject for many years. So have many other people whose conclusions have been distilled off into the Report's making.

The nazi experiment, so far as it is economic in character, is an attempt to achieve security. To achieve it it has paid tribute to slavery. So has the Soviet State. But the attempt to relieve economic distress (which is pretty much what this discussion is all about) goes back to Henry VIII. In a recent book—England's Road to Social Security—Karl de Schweinitz shows that until then men were punished for being destitute. But in the Public Relief Act of 1531 "government in England first took positive responsibility for the relief of economic distress." Those who are interested in a detailed analysis of England's social legislation will find it in this remarkable study.

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In England, as Mr. Clement Attlee has pointed out, Christianity became converted to socialism. But, Mr. Attlee adds, "in no other socialist movement has Christian thought had such a powerful leavening influence." We order the matter differently in our own country. And the charge that a thing is socialistic condemns it at once. At the rate we are going we may expect some day to see a good thing destroyed by the charge that it is Christian in origin.

I do not propose to waste any time with the charge that the Report, or the Wagner Bill, is socialistic. That is either simple idiocy or hypocrisy. But Senator Taft and others are afraid that by this legislation our incentive will be destroyed. Obviously they have not spent much time reading the material they attack. In reply I offer the following:

"If terror be an incentive to thrift, surely the penalties of the system which we have abandoned ought to have stimulated thrift as much as anything could have been stimulated in this world. . . . It is a great mistake to suppose that thrift is caused only by fear; it springs from hope as well as from fear; where there is no hope, be sure there will be no thrift." The quotation is from a speech made in 1908 by Winston Churchill.

The second thing requiring remark about the incentive theory is that all workers one meets have clear visions of Hoovervilles and of selling apples on street corners; and that they know that their incentive had nothing to do with either of these ghastly things.

Regarding the Report itself the first thing to be noticed is that many of its suggestions operate on the theory that we have full employment and a hundred billion dollar income. But the Board is aware of the fact that full employment is not a fixed pattern of modern industrial society. Our workers live a perilous life on the periphery of unemployment that threatens to be panic in character, and lacks the courtesy to give advance notice. The result may be social violence. Lest I seem to be the victim of an *idée fixe* I wish to remind ourselves that our present full employment is war employment, as surely as Hitler's is. And at the moment we know no way in which to keep this employment after the armistice. For the fact is that we have not solved the greatest economic problem of our times—we have merely forgotten it. Professor Schlicter has written of a possible fifteen year boom to take place after the war. This presumably is based on the theory, constantly made articulate by businessmen in my part of the world, that a backlog of "accumulated demand" will keep our factories in full operation. Even so, there is the sixteenth year. Like King Charles's head this thing keeps recurring and grins in the colored page.

Secondly, I wish to point out that we were almost alone in the relatively unviolent character of acceptance of unemployment in the thirties. We kept our faith, on the whole, in our political system. And for us, as for Luther, faith alone justified. But this is dangerous doctrine economically as well as theologically. For we live in a different world now, where faith without good works will not save. "It has become increasingly evident," says the Board, "that systems of government inspire loyalty or faith if they justify themselves by their works. Political democracy has little appeal unless translated into economic realities."

In the days when Stuart Chase was discovering semantics, John Chamberlain told us that college

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students distrusted words. They believed—like the strange people in Swift—that words said the thing which was not. If one moves among the men and women who make our war goods he soon discovers that they do not trust words either. They will trust them less if they are the only unrationed diet after the war.

This, then, is the chief orbit around which realities must revolve. We must pay out of our funds, or out of our system which will be subject to our energies for destruction. Pragmatically regarded the problem is as simply stated as that. Here in Detroit industrialists are already concerned with reconversion. This is a thing with which we must concern ourselves. But there are those who think that reconversion is a word. And, to paraphrase Stevenson, men will not live by catchwords alone but by bread. Unemployment is a persistent fact of our lives; and we have not exorcised its hungry ghost.

The Board is aware of this. If we escape unemployment so much the better. But the Board suggests the creation of government work programs—and we cannot dismiss the suggestion with nonsense about incentive.

Besides these things the Board recommends a system of disability insurance, unemployment compensation benefits which would run for twenty-six weeks, a youth program, a child care program, a widened system of education, new fiscal policies, administrative changes and a system of industrial partnership. Extension of the present social security programs is recommended. By now most of these recommendations are known to most of us.

The Wagner-Dingell Bill follows closely some of these recommendations. For example: unemployment benefits to run for a period of twenty-six weeks. Groups not presently covered are to be included. A provision for the unemployed members of our armed forces appears for the first time. The Board's suggestions in respect to old age and survivor's benefits has been followed. That is to say the present $10 monthly minimum is raised to $20. Maximums are to move from $85 to $120. Medical and hospital insurance is provided. Maternity care is put under unemployment compensation. The destitute are to get aid through federal grants-in-aid to the states.

Before making any comment on either the Report or the Bill it is a fair question to ask how they are related to the Beveridge Plan. This is fair since we have already begun to speak of the "American Beveridge Plan." In so far as the British and Americans are concerned with the question of security the comparison is a valid one. But the Beveridge Plan is more comprehensive and more detailed. It is truly a "cradle to the grave" system. And although the fences of security thrown round the Englishman are more numerous, his security brings him nearer a subsistence level than might ours. Neither does the Beveridge Plan make the forward suggestion respecting new relations between government and business.

The Board's Report is almost entirely free from detailed figures. It is not a Bill as, in a sense, the British Plan is; it is a body of recommendations. It is true that the Wagner Bill contains specifics—but they are not as comprehensive as is the Report, which is more comprehensive, in many ways, than the Beveridge Plan. The minimum of payments, under the Beveridge Plan (and it is a bare minimum), has no relation to wages earned. But both the Report and the Bill provide for such a relationship. Housewives, as such, are covered in the English system. This is not true in our case. While the Bill has maternity provisions, nothing is provided for bringing up children, or for funerals. This is not true of the Beveridge Plan. Sir William Beveridge has pointed out that his system could not operate in our country. Moreover he is frank in attempting economically to induce larger families. For he seems to regard this as a military need. We, apparently, do not.

It is, also, fair to note some differences between our Bill and our Report. In the first place no suggestions respecting the self-employed are found in the Report. In the Bill they would, if they wished, contribute seven percent of their income up to $3,000 a year. In the second place the Bill restricts itself to the unemployed, the insured and the needy.

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As I have noted, the Bill disdains the suggestions of the Board in respect to child care. It ignores the recommendations for the prevention of child neglect and delinquency. It ignores the suggestions for free lunches for school children. It is cold, likewise, to the whole of the Board's recommendations concerning education. It is not interested in the learning process, whether professional or vocational in character. It is wholly barren of ideas with respect to work programs. It offers no ideas regarding our fiscal system. In the most lean and literal sense of the words it is a social security law amended. That and nothing more. It could operate in any system; and to attack it as socialistic is the eeriest form of verbalism.

To me the most amazing provision of the Wagner Bill is the method chosen for financing it. It provides for employee-employer contributions; six percent of earnings is to be split equally between payrolls and pay envelopes. Unlike the British provisions (and the German provisions back in Bismarck's day) government remains financially aloof. In whatever other areas the United States is leading in these days it is not running ahead in the fields of finance.

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For this chosen method contains the most bewildering contradictions. In the first place it runs counter to an NRPB suggestion of September, 1942, which notes the patent fact that it is not enhancing the welfare of the low income groups "to collect any substantial proportion of the funds necessary to finance these measures from the very group whose incomes the programs are striving to raise." This conclusion of the Board is so palpably correct that to disregard it defies simple understanding.

But Senator Wagner argues that his method will help to prevent inflation. Now the Senator is either trying to kill a number of birds with small shot, or he is trying to allay hostile groups by this inflation approach. There can be no question as to the validity of the argument in the present circumstances. And it has the advantage (if it ever gets passed into law) of setting up cash reserves. But the argument has no validity in a post-war world. For the whole of the Board's approach to the problem assumes a period of expanding welfare. The whole point of social security lies in its contribution to an expanding welfare. The whole meaning of the revolutionary period through which we are passing lies in its relation to an expanding welfare. The horizons of welfare have to widen whether there is full employment or not.

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Now we know that in 1937-1938 the imposition of payroll taxes sapped the government spending program. In this period such an arrangement sterilized the fiscal policy of the Roosevelt administration. For these taxes are deflationary in character—and so far the Wagner argument is correct. But, precisely for that reason, they negate a fiscal program that is designed to put more money into the hands of consumers, and defeat its purpose. A tax collected at the source from workers, whose income is theoretically being raised, clearly lowers the purchasing power of that group. Altogether apart from that, if through a variety of taxes—no matter for what purposes—the purchasing power of the worker is reduced, he will not accept the social security program. For in times of stress his income will be declining when he is most in need of it.

The Board has taken cognizance of these things. In its own words: "a direct subsidy from the general revenues financed by borrowing will be essential." It further recommends—given the failure of privately controlled economic forces—that work programs, and improved work and welfare services will, rather than cash allowances, implement a spending policy. And with a very great deal of realism it suggests that the whole system of taxation must change—so that those who can best bear taxation shall have to do it. These are concessions to reality that the sponsors of extended social security shall one day have to make.

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The Wagner Bill, I have said, is a social security bill. It ignores a plethora of factors considered by the Board. I choose here to deal with two of them. One is education. The other is the partnership principle.

In respect to education all our teachers continue to tell us what Jefferson knew—that there is a connection between intelligence and self government. But most of them leave it at that. Free schools were sought in the 1830's—and won—by the trade unions because they recognized that their power to gain their purposes was proportionate to their understanding. Yet the fact is that one out of every five of our men who are of military age has not reached the fourth grade. The labor movement is filled with men who were forced to abandon college. To argue that they are, therefore, better men, is to miss the point. For the point is that our educational system ought to be equally accessible to all who are fit for it. That many men now in uniform are attending college for the first time—and would not otherwise have been there—is likely to sharpen this fact in their minds after the war is over.

This all means that those who want to go to school must go. It means that our returning soldiers must be allowed to pick up where they left off. It means that adult education programs such as we have never before conceived ought to be in the making even now. It means that the whole function of teaching, of curricula, must be revolutionized. It means that our colleges can no longer be green pastures for a functionless class of men and women.

The Board's touching upon the partnership principle grows out of its concern respecting monopoly. Patents are one of the ways in which, in the past, we have managed to create monopolies. The Board asks for more stringent enforcement of the anti-trust laws. This is a large question that I do not propose to discuss here. We have had anti-trust laws since 1890—and monopoly has grown to the point where it has long since seriously challenged the power of government. I will be forgiven if I say that I am skeptical on the subject at this date. But if the monopolies are to be defeated, mild reforms of the patent laws—as are proposed—and enforced anti-trust laws are slender reeds on which to rest my faith.

It is on this account that the partnership principle makes sense. For it is suggested that in certain economic areas mixed corporations come into existence. This amounts to a pluralistic approach to industry. Now anyone aware of the

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possible implications of our post-war period knows that the corporations are doing very well in this war. It has long since been observed that eighty percent of our war contracts have gone to 100 corporations, and that nine percent has gone to one corporation. This represents an enormous and frightening control over our economic life. It is pregnant with tremendous privileges and powers in the post-war America. It is the outstanding fact against which must be measured the strength of our avowed war purposes. Coupled with the TNEC reports on patents it means that if, out of this new grasp at power, corporations build into monopoly after the war at the same rate that they grew after the last one, the economic freedoms for which we fight this war are like prayers uttered to the wind.

It will not do to treat this part of the Report as socialistic in character. The thing is too big for such rhetorical nonsense. Not to share power—and that is all the mixed corporation implies—with industry over such things as strategic materials, as transportation, as patents, in a new world constantly threatened by war is for government to abandon itself as a weakling. It is for government to lose its right to determine foreign relations. At home it means that government is the obedient child of the corporate structure. It means that the security not only of all of us who work at the edges of psychological fear, but the security of the shape government will assume, is to be measured in terms of profit. It means dollar diplomacy both at home and abroad. And I had thought that that was one of the things we had abandoned. I suppose that there is not a voice that would dare raise itself in protest against the TVA. But the mixed corporation is TVA in more areas of our economic life.

It is a valid objection that it may end in government ownership and control. I admit the force of the objection. I admit the possibility of a monolithic state. And the history of European states reminds us that the monolithic state does not solve—it irritates, and censures until all men who live are infected with the disease of orthodoxy. I do not advocate either the monolithic state or the imprisonment of the mind as worth the candle in the solution of any problem. Nor am I going to present myself with false choices between government and the corporation and accept the one and reject the other. I do not think that we are that lost as yet.

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But the Board report is filled with suggestions for changes in administration, in training and in personnel. Those who read may find them. But the suggestions are based on the acceptance of greater lay participation in government. Any reforms in our system—whether it is the mixed corporation or anything else—shall have meaning to the degree that this expectation of increased lay participation is increased.

Social security, public aid, economic reforms, the whole of government itself depends on the extent to which we grow into an enlightened and employed people. Many of the things in the Board Report, many of the weaknesses of the present Wagner Bill will unfold their meaning only by time and trial. Things like these we can change, if we do not like them. But we must change: else we have made this war a part of the series of other wars which we have fought. The power of man to live or die for ideals in war time is inestimable. But it is equalled by the yielding to fatigue in spirituality at the close of most wars.

That is why the details of these plans must be fought over. The plans, as plans; the objectives that they strive to attain must not. Else, like Moses, we do not cross over into the Promised Land. We view it from the mountain top—and see in it a mirage. We remain in the land of disenchantment. To get back where I started from, we face revolution by consent, or revolution by social violence. And, as Sophocles has observed about something else, when we have violence "the end man looks for cometh not."

Communications

SICILIAN LAUDS

Kent, Conn.

TO the Editors: Mrs. Wyatt has written about Sicily's historical background (THE COMMONWEAL, August 6, 1943) with her usual impressionistic charm. I am afraid, however, that she forgot to check her references. Will you permit me the pedantry of a few partial notes on the first two pages of her article:

(1) She writes: "Four thousand years before Christ, the pulse of freedom was already beating in Sicilian veins, and a revolt of the slaves . . ." This incident occurred not in the fifth millennium but in the fifth century before Christ. As a matter of fact, the first Phenician colonies are not thought to have been established until the eighth, or possibly the ninth, century B. C., considerably later than "the dim ages of history."

(2) Mrs. Wyatt refers to Hamilcar, the Carthaginian leader at the battle of Himera, as the "grandfather of Hannibal." Presumably the well-known Hannibal is meant, and the relationship is of course impossible, since more than two and a half centuries elapsed between Himera and the Second Punic War. A Hamilcar was, indeed, the grandfather of Hannibal (the famous Hamilcar Barca), but that is another man and another story.

(3) Mrs. Wyatt speaks of "two Semitic races, from Tyre and Carthage." Whatever a "race" may be, these were certainly not two: Carthage was a colony of the older Phenician cities.

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(4) After describing the destruction of Syracuse by the Arabs in the ninth century, Mrs. Wyatt mentions Theocritus as singing "just before the curtains were drawn." This is surely misleading, for in the ninth century Theocritus had been dead more than a thousand years.

(5) Mrs. Wyatt, after mentioning the Norman conquest of Apulia and Calabria, speaks of Roger "crossing over from Messina" to defeat the Arabs in the Vale of Enna. "To" Messina rather than "from" must be meant.

(6) "In this idyllic kingdom (of the Normans) . . . French, Arabic, Hebrew, Greek and Latin were common tongues." Not quite so, I believe. From the sixth century B. C. until the twentieth century A. D., Hebrew was never the "common tongue" of anyone (it has been artificially revived by the Zionists in our day), but was restricted to liturgical and other theological uses. By the twelfth century, Latin had also been long since similarly confined: and, oddly enough, Latin had never been a "common tongue" in Sicily, even during the Roman centuries, when Greek persisted. It was under the Norman rule that a Lombard dialect of Italian became the Sicilian vernacular, brought by Lombard settlers who were invited by the Norman rulers.

(7) Mrs. Wyatt writes that after the defeat and death of Manfred and Conradin, "Sicily was then offered by the Pope to the brother of Saint Louis, John of Anjou." It was Charles, not John, of Anjou; and the time sequence is altered. The Pope invited Charles precisely to aid in the destruction of Manfred and Conradin, and thus to achieve the fulfillment of the Papacy's century-old resolve to wipe out the entire House of Hohenstaufen.

(8) To give Sicily, in Frederick II's day, "her Renaissance two hundred years before the rest of Europe" is a little extreme. The minor poets and chroniclers of Frederick's court were immensely inferior to the earlier Provençal poets, and to the slightly later North Italian poets of the schools of the "gentle heart" and *"il dolce stil nuovo."* The fact is that, in medieval-modern times, Sicily has never had a "renaissance" of any particular importance.

I have been noting matters of specific fact, most of them, granted, very trivial. But Mrs. Wyatt, along with her presentation of professedly factual material, seems to wish to suggest certain more general relations between liberty, tyranny, Sicilians, and the various invaders of Sicily. I really do not think that this can lead anywhere. Exciting, and even glorious, as have been many episodes in Sicilian history, Sicily and its culture and fate have always been subordinate to influences that have sprung from outside her shores. And so it surely continues today.

JAMES BURNHAM.

The Screen

Is This the Army?

ONCE you get used to the idea that the technicolor movie version of *"This Is the Army"* is not the simple and effective stage show put on by Irving Berlin and some 350 soldiers last year, you can settle back and enjoy a rousing and high spirited film. I think the stage production was more successful in catching the real spirit of the Army, whereas the movie tends to be the Army plus Hollywood. The very introduction into the story of such well-known screen figures as George Murphy, Ronald Reagan, George Tobias, Charles Butterworth and Joan Leslie brings a touch of never-never land into the film. Some of the show's intimate charm was lost in its transference to the screen, which always insists on making things bigger, better and more glamorously perfect, and which thereby loses in reality. But considering all things, Warner Brothers have done a good job in their production. (All the profits are to go to Army Emergency Relief.)

The film's new plot is quite unostentatious. Soldiers stationed at Camp Upton in 1917 stage an army revue and we see Murphy, Tobias and Butterworth and a lot of the boys working on "Yip, Yip, Yaphank." Although a couple of the numbers from this well-known soldier show of World War I are actually exhibited, the show is more talked about than seen. A generation later, we see the sons of some of these men again at Upton. Once more the Army realizes the value of raising morale through putting on theatricals; and certain soldiers are yanked from drilling and maneuvers to find themselves in grease paint and costumes. I would have enjoyed seeing a few rehearsals, but by this time half the running time of this two-hour picture was used up.

The show that these World War II soldiers stage is called "This Is the Army" and it is excellent. Irving Berlin's swell songs are already well known, but they are all so good that they are a pleasure to hear again as we see the revue in the movie. "This Is the Army, Mr. Jones," "I'm Getting Tired So I Can Sleep," "I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen" (which is sung by Sergeant Earl Oxford in a clever skit that includes some remarkable impersonations of the Canteen's personalities) are bound to win you to this film. The excellent singing and dancing, plus the bag-punching of Joe Louis in the Negro number, "What the Well Dressed Man in Harlem Will Wear," almost steal the show—and this is something in a show that is full of outstanding entertainment. The film's producers, Jack L. Warner and Hal Wallis, and its director, Michael Curtiz, have tried hard to keep this movie version of a vaudeville show from becoming static. To a great extent they succeed, but some of the film slows up a bit when they forgot to employ movie, not stage, technique. They were wise not to attempt to show all the revue at one stretch. We see the first act, which ends with that splendid finale "Give a Cheer for the Navy"; this is followed by a montage sequence that touches the cities that the Army company actually included on its tour; then we see the numbers that make up the second act when there is a command performance in Washington for the Big Chief.

Woven into the story is a slight romance between George Murphy's son (Ronald Reagan) and Charles Butterworth's daughter (Joan Leslie). This comes out as you want it to, although it looks for a while as if Reagan is going to refuse on heroic grounds to marry the girl he loves. The film has a few weaknesses of characterization in Murphy's failure to look old enough to be

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anyone's father, and in Alan Hale's continued mugging as the hard-boiled sergeant. I thought the sentiment got rather soft occasionally, but perhaps war-time audiences like a film that makes one choke with emotion and wipe a furtive tear. Oldsters will have a chance to sob too, particularly in one lovely, nostalgic scene in which Irving Berlin, himself, sings his famous "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning."

I'm not sure that "This Is the Army" shows up what the Army is really like, but I do know that the film has all the enthusiasm of a college pep meeting—and its patriotic flag waving is done on the best George M. Cohan scale. There probably won't be a person in the audience who can see the film's big finale (which is beautifully staged in stunning technicolor) without praying amen as the entire ensemble sings: "This Time Is the Last Time."

Paramount has whipped up a little farcical nonsense in which actors perform as soldiers but would fool no one into believing that this is the army. *"Let's Face It"* is based on last year's musical comedy which was popular principally because of Danny Kaye and his utterly mad brand of hilarity. Bob Hope holds his own in this Kaye rôle, but unfortunately a couple of Danny's songs which were the high point of the stage version are not included in the movie. The plot, which seems to take itself more seriously in the movie than on the stage, is based on "The Cradle Snatchers" of the 1920's, a play that had to do with three middle-aged dames who try to get even with their philandering husbands by dating three young men who are not so keen about the assignment. Eve Arden, Zasu Pitts and Phyllis Povah are the three wives; they seem more pathetic than funny in their failure to interest the young soldiers. Bob Hope, who is an expert at handling wisecracks, and Cully Richards and Dave Willock are amusing as the reluctant gigolos. But even a good comedian like Hope has difficulty squeezing laughs out of mediocre material. Fred Kahlmar's production is good, and Director Sidney Lanfield keeps things moving at a fast pace. A dance team by the name of Nicco and Tanya help to make one sequence very lively, and of course the combination of Hutton and Hope is not exactly dull. But most of "Let's Face It" seems very tired; and its forced humor and obvious efforts to be risqué are very heavy handed.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Editors' Choice

GRAND CROSSING. *Alexander Saxton. Harper.* $2.50.

STALWART SWEDEN. *Joachim Joesten. Doubleday.* $2.50.

THE BAREFOOT MAILMAN. *Theodore Pratt. Duell Sloan and Pearce.* $2.50.

From Harvard to the Slums

IT HAS often been thought smart at American colleges to mock at certain conventions, to be profane and boast of great prowess with the ladies and scoff at the curriculum. At least before the war. But the very sameness of this type of banter and of the round of drink and dances

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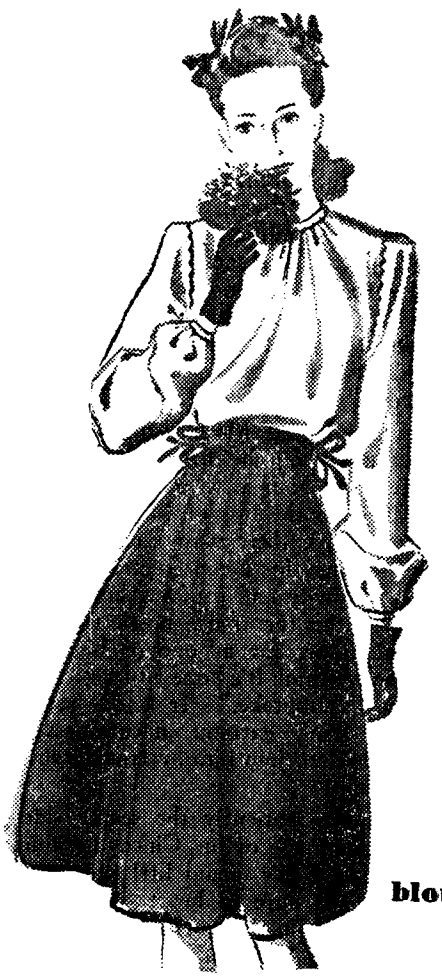

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and weekends constitute a convention against which the real rebels stand forth. "Grand Crossing" is Alexander Saxton's largely autobiographical story of a radical who not only turned away from the ways of his classmates and the business success they counted on but who, with intense, anguished and passionate sincerity sought for the meaning of life and his own rôle in the world. Few novels in recent months have dealt so absorbingly with the classic theme of man's quest for truth and happiness.

Harvard is the first scene of Michael's search—as it may also have been with the youthful Mr. Saxton. Here are three of his reactions: "Harvard does a lot for you. It's not everyone that enjoys music and books and painting; good talk and wine." Of social life at the University, "No one was so naïve as not to smile at things spoken in too warm a tone." And this would prepare you for a career of success in a world "where glasses clink but with moderation, and the low voices repeat what they have said and learned before."

A summer West then brings Michael in touch with Ben Baum of Chicago (whom he first finds returning from an all-night drinking bout with a girl). Further drinking all round leads to the loss of Michael's return ticket so that the two work their way East together—picking hops, cutting saplings for a construction gang and riding freights. Ben is rowdy and profane, but he has a heart of gold. He has in his tortured agnostic way a real sense of the Mystical Body, for as one of his friends describes Ben, "He doesn't think it's honest to save himself anything anybody else has to take." It is this sense of human solidarity and Ben's extreme naturalness and vitality that bring Michael to join him by transferring to the University of Chicago.

Michael seems to endure patiently the seamy side of college routs, the foul language of the Chicago trainmen with whom he works and Ben's sordid little adventures. He is a knight errant, the pure in heart, seeking life's meaning and his own mission in the world. A good opening—what his Negro friend, William Christmas, calls "a nice slice of pie"—beckons to him for want of something definite. And it is the negative act of turning down finally this position with his uncle on a big business Washington newsletter that constitutes the completion of his quest. With the girl he takes unto himself without benefit of clergy, but with every intention of going through later what he considers mere formalities, he decides to spend his life in some vague way in solidarity with the downtrodden. "They were responsible, the two of them, not for themselves alone, but for all the others before and after."

"Grand Crossing," then, is a first novel with a message, dealing with people who want to do something to atone for man's inhumanity to man. "When people rot . . . everyone alive is guilty of murder." Ben Baum, who goes to live among the poor and in a way is martyred, is a flaming symbol of belief in the solidarity of man. Harvard and the upper crust of the University of Chicago serve as symbols of the artificiality and pettiness of the bourgeois, as Bernanos would use the term. And in the background there is the symbol of the clock in a Chicago Catholic church sounding out the hours unaffected by the gun-fire, simple pleasures of good fellowship or agonized doubts of a solitary which it accompanies. Michael counts the strokes occasionally, but the bell doesn't really tell him anything.

Mr. Saxton has poetic feelings for many things, for wind and shore and water, lights along the railroad track, the sweeping spaces of the West, crowds of people at the World's Fair. His pace is swift. His solution is both vague and over-exacting, but he gives a convincing picture of the type of unbelievers or half-believers who challenge Christians by their dedication to the well-being of their fellow men.

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Neutral Sweden

"STALWART SWEDEN" has managed to keep out of the war, and this fact bothers Mr. Joesten exceedingly. Mr. Joesten is an anti-nazi exile who, until he was interned by the Swedes, had been for several years a foreign correspondent in Scandinavia. He was interned for a while and it is just as well not to mention at any length his complaints about being interned because then one would have to investigate how it is possible for a man to be so naïve. Mr. Joesten has now come to America, but he is still very perturbed about Sweden being neutral, and he wants us to know that Sweden is not going to charge gallantly into Germany out of love for democracy. He wants us to know that Sweden would prefer to avoid being invaded by Germany or by Russia or even by the United Nations. Sweden, he says, is still on the fence. Sweden follows a selfish policy.

Mr. Joesten says that there are a lot of fine people in Sweden, a majority of the people of Sweden, who are democratic and who want the nazis to lose the war. But then he makes an amazing discovery. He has found out that there are a lot of Swedish business men who have business interests in Germany. A country which is not at war has foreign trade. He has found out that the Swedish aristocracy has German connections (just like the Kings of England). Perhaps not as a discovery, but only as a reminder, we are told that Goering's first wife was Swedish. Hence a Cliveden set in a Swedish castle. Perhaps, also not as a discovery—at least to the State Department—we are told of the existence in America of an agency called the "American-Swedish News Exchange," financed by Swedish big business, which seeks to persuade Americans that Sweden is just fine. Then all the revelations come in a rush: There is Mr. Axel L. Wenner-Gren who is a multi-millionaire (with yacht and everything) and who is on the Black List (because it would scarcely have been possible for him to have avoided doing business with the enemy—otherwise how can you be a neutral millionaire?) and who is an appeaser (but there again one is a neutral or a belligerent and one's status affects one's aims). There is the appalling fact that the Swedish Government, in the days of Geneva, lost faith in collective security after observing that France and Britain had lost faith in collective security. There is the fact that Sweden made concessions of various sorts and importance to Germany; that Sweden is afraid of allowing free ex-

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pression of anti-German feeling in the Swedish press and has established a ruthless censorship. There is the fact that the Swedes have always hated the Russians and still are of the opinion that Russian victory will be perilous to them.

But when Mr. Joesten has finished giving what he calls the other face of the medal, he has produced an effect he probably did not intend to produce. His book will not turn a thoughtful reader against the Swedes nor even against Mr. Joesten. Gunder Hagg will be allowed to return to Sweden with his trophies unmolested; Mr. Joesten will be forgiven for having adopted perhaps too fervently and too rapidly the tone of our own "liberal" press. For after all, implicitly or explicitly, again and again, he answers the charges he makes. To such an extent that he succeeds in persuading the reader—who might be unaware of Sweden's problems—that this "stalwart" country's difficulties are immense and complicated and that not even the most orthodox anti-nazi—were he in the place of the Swedish King or the Swedish Prime Minster—would be able to solve them by a simple application of democracy and fervor. The more we think about this book, the less we fear to recommend it, because the case Mr. Joesten makes against Swedish policy serves mainly to arouse sympathy for a nation faced with so many dangers and fortunately still surviving.

A Summer's Tale

SUMMER is the season for walking barefoot on the beach, for breathing air that is inevitably like wine, for looking at water which is at least as blue as the Mediterranean, for basking in the warm affection of the sun, for falling in love and dreaming of connubial bliss on a tropical isle. If you haven't the time, money or opportunity to enjoy these lovely things in the flesh, you can find most of them in a very engaging little novel called "The Barefoot Mailman" by Theodore Pratt.

In the Florida of the 1880's there was neither road nor rails to bridge the 66 miles between Palm Beach and Miami, only the sloping highway of the white beach that cushioned the "palm-green shores" from the rhythmic violence of the sea. On this sandy strip walked the famous "barefoot mailmen" with their swift, limping stride, especially designed to fit the slope of the sand, taking three days each way. There were fifty families at Palm Beach and maybe eighty at Miami and nothing in between but coconuts, flamingoes, alligators, a few dangerous beachcombers (bad *hombres* all) and other assorted *flora et fauna* of America's only tropics.

As you might have guessed, the hero of Mr. Pratt's story is a barefoot mailman, and into the yarn he has woven a few historical incidents such as the naming of Palm Beach, the great wine wreck, the building of the houses of refuge, and the contested election on the county seat issue. This is a good idea because there was danger of letting the whole thing lapse into the romantic hide-and-seek-in-the-underbrush that passes in Hollywood for reality in any story involving palm trees and a beach. Mr. Pratt is romantic enough and he can turn a twist of plot or cook up an exciting climax with the best of them, but the difference is that he has taste and a sense of proportion and some idea of what life is all about.

In fact, Mr. Pratt is an excellent writer—nothing great or fancy, but very good. In the first paragraph we find this: "The fifty-foot sharpie bowled down the coast, sails taut and bending their limber masts. Her low rail awash,

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For upwards of a century now what is known as the Gaelic Renaissance has been literary history, but unfortunately most people have understood it, for all the world as though the fire of Christian faith lighted at Tara had never kindled **a culture which for centuries illumined not only Ireland but the whole of Europe . . .**

Ireland once was pagan and had a pagan culture. Colm was the embodiment of both cultures. It is a legend, but a tremendously symbolic legend which credits Colm with the recovery of the great epic of the Tain, lost to Bardic memory, but restored when the saint summoned from the grave the ancient king, Fergus MacRoy, that the story might be taken down from his long-silent tongue. Mr. Farren shows that **Colmcille, "archangel of men, God's dove," was of the same race as Fergus and Cuchulain and the other heroes of the Tain,** that Colm the poet and the defender of the poets at the famous assembly of Druim Ceat was of the same lineage as the ancient bards and the first tellers of the Red Branch epic.

In other words, Robert Farren is a master of the whole vast subject of Gaelic culture, upon which he has drawn to fashion a poem after the ancient bardic manner **that would have rejoiced the heart of Oisin and Dallan Forgaill and stirred the blood of both Finn and Colmcille . . .**

It has another quality of greatness; that is its form. These are not English meters. His genius has devised, as the vastly dissimilar genius of Mangan devised, an inspired vehicle for his inspiration, a pattern of English words that has all the fire and color, all the vigorous, pulsating life of the Gaelic without remotely suggesting a Gaelic model.

This is the kind of thing towards which poets of the hidden Ireland strove, poetry over which both O'Curry and Thomas Davis would have shed tears of joy, since it so clearly proves that "the eggs of eagles still make eagles."

—Quoted from a review by Blanche Mary Kelly in THE CATHOLIC WORLD, of Robert Farren's THIS MAN WAS IRELAND: The Song of Colmcille, Price $3.00.

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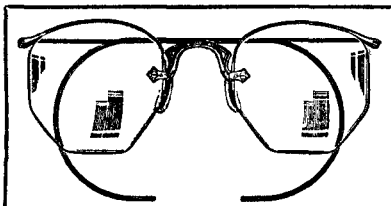

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she skipped over the sea, treading lightly, dancing on the riotous water and never sinking to wallow in the troughs." A very pretty sentence. Later we find likable and believable characters and one of the most engaging little love stories we have run into in some time.

Mr. Pratt seems to lean toward the old-fashioned canons of romance: the shy, tongue-tied hero; the coy heroine; everything decent and refined; and just enough uncertainty about her intentions to keep you guessing till the last chapter. And frankly, we find this kind of boy-meets-girl much more interesting and moving—when done as well as Mr. Pratt can do it—than all the quick and redundant seductions of the hard-boiled school. Perhaps it is because the more exciting love becomes physically, the more uninteresting it becomes mentally and spiritually, that is, outside of holy matrimony. (Gad, we never realized the water out here was so deep!) Anyway, we found Mr. Pratt's love story very effective.

Mr. Pratt has already written several successful novels and has been published frequently by the *New Yorker*. We can't understand why his name rang no bell in our minds when we first picked up the book. Must have been plain ignorance on our part. For summer reading, "The Barefoot Mailman" is A-1.

More Books of the Week

Dmitri Shostakovich: the Life and Background of a Soviet Composer. Victor Ilyich Seroff in collaboration with Nadejda Galli-Shohat, Aunt of the Composer. Knopf. $3.00.

THE SEVENTH SYMPHONY of Dmitri Shostakovich was released to the world last year with an epoch-making amount of publicity and fanfare. It had been composed to an accompaniment of bursting bombs. It was microfilmed, rushed through Teheran and flown in an army plane to the United States. Hot upon its heels comes Shostakovich's biography, while that young musician is still 37. Shostakovich is a unique phenomenon in musical history. Certainly Beethoven, Handel and Haydn never dreamed of such recognition of the musical art. And what would they have thought of the Stalin prize of 100,000 rubles, the highest fee on record, which was awarded Shostakovich for a mere piano quintet?

Should Shostakovich's place in music remain where it is now, Victor Seroff's biography will be source material for his biographer. It is the story of Dmitri Shostakovich's family as told in letters to Dmitri's aunt in America, Nadejda Gali-Shohat. What the letters do not tell has been filled in with anecdotes and reminiscences of friends and associates in this country. It is not always well written and has the fault of such a collection that it hangs together loosely. But the picture of family life which one gets from the letters of Dmitri's mother is of absorbing interest. It is the account of a talented and intelligent family which had to undergo unbelievable misfortune, poverty and sickness and yet managed to keep alive the spiritual and artistic values which made life reasonable.

Mr. Seroff's reconstruction of Shostakovich's fall from grace in 1936 does not make that famous episode much clearer. After having acclaimed Shostakovich as *the* Soviet composer, the government turned the full fury of its wrath upon him in *Pravda*. The government had decided that Shostakovich's music was "formalistic" and that it was not Soviet music. Soviet music must not be interested in form alone. It need not be music *from* the

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people or *by* the people (the Shostakovich family is not proletarian), but it must be *for* the people. Having decided that "Lady Macbeth from the District of Mzensk" was wonderful, it decided that it was terrible. A veil was drawn over the new Fourth Symphony. What happened as time passed is not clear. If Shostakovich fought back and said anything, it did not make its way into print.

Mr. Seroff says that the composer's temporary liquidation was a necessary part of the government's policy at that time. The country was getting ready for war; solidarity and cheer were needed and Shostakovich's music was too gloomy. However, a year and a half later Shostakovich was reinstated in government favor. The heresy of formalism had been outlived and Shostakovich stated in print that he was again writing music for the people, that he wanted to write music for the people and that all music must be for the people. . . . Then came the Seventh Symphony which is dedicated to the war-torn city of Leningrad. The memory of one hearing of the Seventh Symphony last winter bears out Shostakovich's fidelity to the party line. The Symphony is long, programmatic and has a catchy people's march in it. There is as little gloom as is compatible with the subject.

MARGARET M. BYARD.

Our Daily Bread. Enrique Gil Gilbert. Farrar. $2.50.

THE BEST THING about this book is the title, for, to be perfectly frank, one comes to the end in utter confusion. Only two impressions are distinct, and they seem to have no important bearing on the main topic: female curves and expectant mothers. Persons and events are in a hopeless muddle, and the story throughout lacks sequence and cohesion. The characters, without exception, are colorless, unappealing even in their weakness.

Perhaps there is some merit in the author's effort to portray certain social evils in his country, briefly, the slavery of Ecuadorian labor in the rice fields. Since, however, he fails to breathe life into his personages, he defeats his own purpose, namely: to create interest in their sordid plight.

I can see no reason for the choice of this book as a prize novel, and less for its translation. As to the latter, without my having read the original, it would seem to me that Dudley Poore has made the most of the material at hand.

LULÚ VARGAS VILA.

Czechoslovakia in European History. S. Harrison Thomson. Princeton. $3.75.

BEFORE MUNICH, Czechoslovakia had been a *terra incognita* to the average American, as well as to most American scholars, many of whom could never quite distinguish between the terms "Czechoslovakia," "Yugoslavia," "Slovenia," "Slovakia," or even "Czecho-Slovenia." Only very, very few American-born specialists could boast a thorough knowledge about the intricacies of the politics of Central and Eastern Europe. Dr. Thomson of the University of Colorado stands in the forefront of this small cluster. He actually reads and speaks the "unspeakable" Czech language, and has utilized this special capacity to enrich America's scholarship with numerous specialized researches on Central Europe and as the editor of the *Journal of Central European Affairs.*

The present collection of fifteen essays designed to trace the development of several of the more acute problems of Czechoslovak life and history (such as the relation of the Czech state to the Holy Roman Empire, the problem of

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the German minority, the renaissance of the Czech people, Czech nationalism, the Slovak question, the struggle for Czech and Slovak independence, Czechoslovakia's internal affairs 1918-1938, foreign relations, and "Munich and After") will enhance Thomson's reputation as a careful historian. It must be noted that he does not present here a history in the orthodox sense of that term. Though the general treatment follows a chronological order, the treatment emphasizes only the determining issues of Czechoslovakia's history. Furthermore, it is one of the few books in English which considers the Czechoslovak land and people as participants in the whole European picture.

In general, then, Thomson's book is a valuable summary of the historical rôle of Czechoslovakia in the current of Europe's development. It is, indeed, a book based on wide research which corrects many errors of other writers and presents a clear and straightforward picture of its subject. It is popular in manner. Those who have never found time to go through other books on the subject will doubtless learn from it much that they never knew.

JOSEPH S. ROUCEK.

So Little Time. John P. Marquand. Little. $2.75.

SUPERLATIVES will greet Mr. Marquand's new novel—most of them well deserved. And readers, deeply engaged with his Jeffrey Wilson and their own recollection of experiences they have shared with him, will find that the almost six hundred pages here have turned fast. That absorbing power is the chief of many triumphs. It should not blind us to the ingenuity of the plan, the structural excellence and the artistry which we may, with too little justice, take for granted in Mr. Marquand's work. He has the sure touch which we covet for literature.

"So Little Time" is long, somewhat crowded with secondary elements, a few of which lack the strong reality of its main theme and characters. But theme and character and the author's feeling for both are what count most. Upon the fourteen months before Pearl Harbor, when time was running out—and we knew it—for follies and absurdities and good things, too, in our America, Mr. Marquand has turned the light of his shrewd understanding. Jeffrey's life is reflected here, not in its events alone, but in its quality. Here, too, refracted in humor and satire, are both the perennial human comedy and some of our transient aberrations, like the apotheosis of the foreign-correspondent-commentator-news-analyst.

Jeffrey Wilson is a most effective character with whom to relive the critical year. He is a significant, interesting individual with special background for his perceptions and his yearning over his eldest son, just old enough for college, love and war. Probably no other soldier father (in World War I) of a soldier son is precisely like him, for Mr. Marquand has not taken the easy way of a generalizing type. He has achieved the more rewarding creation of a concentrating, not merely a representative, personality.

OLIVE B. WHITE.

The One God. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange. Herder. $6.00.

THIS is a complete English translation of a standard and important tract constituting a commentary on the first twenty-six questions of Pars Prima of Saint Thomas's "Summa Theologica." The translator is Dom Bede Rose, O.S.B. The work is admirably printed and presented, and should be of great usefulness to seminaries and to all students of theology.

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The Inner Forum

Diocesan Radio Forum

FOR FOUR years, the Diocesan Library of Wilmington, Del., has broadcast a Catholic Forum of the Air. Unlike that of St. Francis Xavier University of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, whose program (July 16 issue) was designed "to show that Democracy can be made to work," our object is to dispel ignorance and bigotry by breaking down prejudice; to broadcast the truths of the Gospel as interpreted by the Catholic Church.

Every Sunday afternoon, 4:30-5, our station, WDEL, "The Catholic Forum of the Air" holds its weekly session. The unique character of the program is its lay personnel, which has the unqualified approval of the Most Reverend Edmond J. FitzMaurice, D.D., Bishop of Wilmington. The membership includes only men and women of college level: lawyers, doctors, business men, teachers, social workers, musicians, artists and dramatists—about thirty in all—including Negroes. This class meets regularly every second week, at which time the scripts for the programs are read and discussed, then submitted to the official Diocesan Censor Librarian, who frequently attends the meetings. At stated times the group receives spiritual instruction and assists at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The chairman of the radio program is a layman. Music is both "live" and transcribed.

The subjects have included Proofs for the Existence of God, Apologetics, Liturgy, Holy Days, Sacraments and the Gasparri Catechism. Regular round tables come at the close of each series. At present, the topic is "Our Relations with South America." The material is provided by the librarian of the Diocesan Library. The numerous letters from all sources—pro and con—are the best evidence that the radio audience is large and varied. Many letters of commendation come from Protestant ministers. Some are anonymous. We receive this service free of charge, fifty-two Sundays of the year, and I am told that the same service will be accorded any Catholic group, anywhere, for the asking, provided the programs are well prepared, of public interest and free from controversy. Further information may be had by applying to Mother Agatha, moderator and librarian, 1104 Pennsylvania Avenue, Wilmington, Del.

MOTHER AGATHA, O.S.U.

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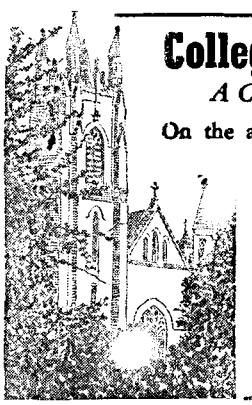

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Immaculata, Pennsylvania. A Catholic Institution for the Higher Education of Women. Conducted by the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. National and Regional Accreditation. Courses leading to the degrees: A.B., B.S. in Science, B.S. in Home Economics, B.S. in Economics and Business, B.M. Pre-Medical, Pre-Legal, Teacher Training Courses. Placement Service. Accelerated Program. Summer Term: June 13 to September 4, 1943. Catalog and View Book on request. Address: Registrar, Immaculata College, Immaculata, Pa.

ROSEMONT COLLEGE

Rosemont, Pa. Catholic College for the Higher Education of Women conducted by the Religious of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Incorporated under the laws of the State of Pennsylvania with power to confer Degrees in Arts and Science. For resident and non-resident students. Situated eleven miles from Philadelphia on the Main Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Fully accredited. Telephone Bryn Mawr 4514. Address Registrar.

COLLEGE MISERICORDIA

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